

No nation shall be granted trade treatment less favorable than that granted to the most favored nation. In other words, no playing favorites. Every nation is to be treated equitably, without discrimination, when it comes to the terms of trade.

Thus, the concept represents the lowest common denominator of trade status—the basic treatment that all receive.

Over time, however, this concept came to be known not as, say, “non-discriminatory treatment” status, or “least favored nation” status, but as “most favored nation” status. This unfortunate terminology has fostered the mistaken view that MFN is a special treatment granted only to a privileged few. In fact, just the opposite is true: MFN, as the basic trading status between nations, is granted to virtually all nations with whom the United States trades. The exceptions can almost be counted on one hand: Serbia, Laos, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Cuba, North Korea, and Cambodia. I might add that Cambodia is about to come off that already meager list, if legislation now pending in Congress is approved.

So while the concept of MFN is sound, the term used to denote that concept is misleading and has resulted in a good deal of mischief—a fact that Senators MOYNIHAN and I have lamented often during Senate Finance Committee hearings. It is time that we called the MFN nondiscrimination concept by a term that more accurately represents its meaning.

Therefore, I am joining with Chairman ROTH, Senator MOYNIHAN and all of my Finance Committee colleagues to amend U.S. law, where appropriate, to replace the term MFN with the term “NTR:” normal trade relations. From this point on, we will discuss legislation and hold debate on the non-discrimination concept using the term NTR in place of MFN.

With the concept of MFN remain the same? Yes. Are we signaling a change in domestic policy, or modifying our international obligations in any way? No. But we are making perfectly clear to everyone the true meaning and purpose of this centuries-old concept. And it is my hope that our legislation will result in a better understanding of international trade relations, both here in the Congress and in the eyes of the public.

MARINE CORPS GENERAL OFFICER REQUIREMENT

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, on Wednesday, my colleague from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY, posed a legitimate question regarding the Marine Corps general officer requirement. As I said at the time, that question deserves a legitimate answer. His question basically was, Why does this year's Defense authorization bill provide an extra 12 general officers for the Marines at a time when the Marines are very much in a downsizing mode? The Marine

Corps recognized the need for additional general officers several years ago. They developed a plan which was then validated by an independent civilian study and received scrutiny and approval at the Secretary of the Navy level. The Assistant Secretary of Defense received the study and found the rationale to be legitimate and supportable.

First, let me address Senator GRASSLEY's concern for the growth of service headquarters. The Marine Corps' request for additional general officers is not an attempt to increase the size of their service headquarters. For the record, half of those general officers authorized will fill warfighting billets which are currently vacant. Another four will be available for assignment to our warfighting CINCS and two will be used to fill the positions of commanding general at the two Marine Corps recruit depots. As Senator GRASSLEY quoted General Sheehan, “Service Headquarters should not be growing as the force shrinks.” I agree, and General Krulak, Commandant of the Marine Corps agrees; Marine Headquarters will not be growing with the addition of these general officers.

Second, let me talk for a few minutes about why the Marines need the additional generals. As the Marines have been brought into the joint arena, the Corps received no increase in flag officer strengths while willingly picking up additional joint requirements at the general officer level. As they have been called upon to fill legitimate joint billets, the Marines have had to leave internal warfighting billets vacant. For instance, a Marine division and a Marine airwing have colonels serving as assistant commanders. This leaves only one general for forces of 18,000 and 15,000 respectively. The other services may have at least two to three flag officers in comparable units.

As I have said, 6 of the 12 generals included in the bill would go directly into existing vacant warfighting positions. Four of the other six would permit the Marines an appropriate representation at the senior level in the joint arena. This will ensure equitable representation in joint duty positions as we envisioned when we passed Goldwater-Nickles. Let me add that the study that I mentioned earlier documented an even larger requirement for additional marine generals. The Commandant reduced that to 14. Our staff validated only 12. I really believe that this is the right thing for this body to do. This matter has received the closest of scrutiny at all levels and was found to be sound.

In summary, Mr. President, the Marine Corps would agree with General Sheehan's remarks that the unwarranted growth of headquarters staffs ultimately threatens the services' warfighting capabilities. However, as I just discussed, the Marine Corps is not trying to increase the size of its headquarters staff, but is first attempting to correct a long-standing deficiency in

the number of general officers authorized to fill existing warfighting billets, and second, is in good faith pursuing the need to meet the requirements of the joint warfighting arena mandated by Goldwater-Nickles. The Marine Corps' request has been studied extensively and is supported by both Secretary of the Navy, and the Department of Defense. Correspondingly, the Armed Services Committee has studied and agreed with the requirement.

I respect the inquiry from my colleague from Iowa. He asked a good question and I am pleased to be able to report that the Armed Services Committee's recommendation is supported by analytical evidence and is requirements based. I am confident that we have made the proper recommendation; however, I assure my colleague that the Armed Services Committee will continue to exercise its oversight responsibilities by reviewing the Marine Corps general officer requirements annually.

ALEXANDR LEBED'S ATTACKS ON FAITH

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, when Alexandr Lebed called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints “mold and scum” he attacked my faith. Russia's new security chief—the man who stands behind Boris Yeltsin—attacked the faith of America's 6th largest church. I believe this requires an immediate and forceful response, and my colleagues and I have drafted a letter to Boris Yeltsin, Ambassador Vorontsov and Secretary of State Christopher.

In his campaign comments yesterday, Lebed struck the nationalist chord. He spoke of the “officially recognized” faiths of “Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.” There is no mention of Russia's Jews, and that concerns me greatly.

The Mormon faith is a “security threat” to Russia, according to Lebed. It is comparable to the Japanese cult that unleashed poison gas on Tokyo last year. Comparing the Christian faith of the Mormons to a murderous cult led by a deranged individual is a calumny. Referring to the Mormons as a security threat appears to be anti-democratic demagoguery reminiscent of communist propaganda.

Remember that, in the old days of communist propaganda, the Russian people were kept in ignorance and fear with official myths of fabricated foreign threats.

Remember that, in the old days of the communist regime, the totalitarian state disguised itself as a paternalistic state that denied all individual rights, including the freedom of religious practice.

We shouldn't be surprised, after all. Lebed has taken his outrageous rhetoric right out of the resurgent communist party's playbook. This bodes ill for democratic evolution in Russia.

I think Mormons should be insulted, and I am declaring my outrage here. I

think Jews should be concerned, and I am declaring my complete support for Russian Jews here.

And I think the Russian people should be insulted. I have too much respect for the character, strength, and, yes, the spirit of the Russian people to think that they need to be patronized by threats of religious persecution.

I will continue to support democratic evolution in Russia. And I think that this evolution demands respect for all human rights—including the right to freedom of religion. I have expressed this in a letter I have drafted to President Yeltsin and Ambassador Vorontsov, and I am grateful that my colleagues here have co-signed it. I am also happy to sign the letter Senator BENNETT has drafted to Secretary of State Christopher.

I ask unanimous consent that these letters be printed in the Record.

I now call on Alexandr Lebed to apologize, and to demonstrate that he has no intention of repeating his threats to freedom of religion in Russia. The future of democratic Russia depends on the preservation of this freedom.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, June 28, 1996.

His Excellency BORIS YELTSIN,
President of the Russian Federation, The Kremlin,
Moscow, Russia.

DEAR PRESIDENT YELTSIN: We are writing to express our outrage at the comments on religion reported by Western and Russian news agencies of your new National Security Council Chief, Alexandr Lebed. Mr. Lebed's malicious, unfounded and untrue remarks are an attack on all of the Christian faithful of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormon Church. His comparison of the Mormons to a murderous cult in Japan is offensive, false, and a heinous calumny that could not be explained by mere ignorance.

In addition, his notable exclusion of the Jewish faith from the religions he believes should be "officially recognized" raises concerns worldwide. We are greatly worried over what such an omission means for Russia's Jews.

We are strong supporters of democratic evolution in Russia and have watched with great admiration many of the recent developments in your country. But we simply cannot understand how such hateful declarations of intolerance from leaders of the Russian government can be reconciled with individual human rights, the whole of which cannot exclude freedom of religion.

Furthermore, while we admire and support the very real movement toward democracy in Russia, we cannot ignore the manifestation, explicit in these remarks, of a mentality from Russia's authoritarian past that fabricates foreign threats and influences.

Finally, we have all studied Russian history. As citizens of a free country, we've probably had access to greater resources on Russian history than citizens of your country had up until a few years ago. Any understanding of Russian history must recognize the character and intelligence of the Russian people as well as their individual courage. It is simply incomprehensible to us that any of Russia's leaders would insult their own citizens with a paternalistic attempt to prevent

them from making their own determinations about matters as deeply personal as religious beliefs.

Sincerely,

ORRIN G. HATCH.
JESSE HELMS.
ROBERT F. BENNETT.
ARLEN SPECTER.
HARRY REID.
JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN.

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, June 28, 1996.

His Excellency YULIY M. VORONTSOV,
Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Wash-
ington, DC.

DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR: We are writing to express our outrage at the comments on religion reported by Western and Russian news agencies of your new National Security Council Chief, Alexandr Lebed. Mr. Lebed's malicious, unfounded and untrue remarks are an attack on all of the Christian faithful of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormon Church. His comparison of the Mormons to a murderous cult in Japan is offensive, false, and a heinous calumny that could not be explained by mere ignorance.

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U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, June 28, 1996.

The Honorable WARREN CHRISTOPHER,
Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: According to Western news agencies, yesterday General Alexandr Lebed, the new head of Russia's National Security Council, made a number of comments on religious life in Russia today. First, he equated the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to the Japanese terrorist cult Aum Supreme Truth. His characterization of the Church is defamatory and indefensible in any circumstances, let alone for the second most powerful official in the

Russian Federation. Further, given Russia's history of anti-Semitism, his omission of the Jewish faith as an acceptable part of religious life in Russia further reflects a dangerous return to the practices of the past.

Equally disturbing, General Lebed's assessment of the principal religious traditions in Russia, beyond being false, is taken directly from the prelection speeches of Communist Party Gennadei Zyuganov. This willingness to adopt Communist misstatement on the part of a Russian government official leaves us genuinely concerned about whether the Russian political elite is serious in its efforts to break decisively with the Communist past.

As Senators, however, we are most offended that such statements by Mr. Lebed, or any other Russian official, indicate no tolerance in Russia for religious freedom or dissent of any kind. Such behavior demonstrates that, despite the presence of electoral institutions, Russia has made precious little progress toward the development of a civil society. Indeed, Mr. Lebed's statements may have demonstrated that the emperor of Russia "democracy" has no clothes.

Finally, Mr. Secretary, inasmuch as freedom of religion is a core element of American society and one of the bases of our current assistance program, we ask that you review United States assistance to Russia. In a separate letter, we will be raising the same issue with Brian Atwood, Administrator of AID. We look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,

ROBERT F. BENNETT.
HARRY REID.
ARLEN SPECTER.
ORRIN G. HATCH.
JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:58 pm., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3663. An act to amend the District of Columbia Self-Government and Government Reorganization Act to permit the Council of the District of Columbia to authorize the issuance of revenue bonds with respect to water and sewer facilities, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3675. An act making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker also signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 2437. An act to provide for the exchange of certain lands in Gilpin County, Colorado.